



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

July 29, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL DOE EMPLOYEES
FROM: HAZEL R. O'LEARY *Hazel R. O'Leary*
SUBJECT: GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

Public participation must be a fundamental component of the Department's program operations, planning activities, and decision-making. The business of the Department must be open to the full view and input of those whom it serves, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and contracts.

To ensure that we operate in this manner, the Department's Public Participation Policy was developed by a cross-cutting team that included field representatives. This policy marks a clear break with past practice by challenging the Department and its contractors to perform to a new standard of openness and service.

Within this policy framework, each site will develop its own public participation program and plans in consultation with stakeholders and with the concurrence of appropriate Headquarters program offices. In achieving the goals of public participation, managers are responsible for:

- * identifying, planning, funding, supporting, and implementing the appropriate level and scope of public participation activities in their programs;
- * ensuring that public participation principles, values, and processes are fully understood and practiced within their programs and at their sites;
- * providing necessary human, information, systems, and financial resources; and,
- * ensuring that their staff receive basic communication and public participation training, and where appropriate, advanced public participation training.

To promote teamwork, share the benefits of experience and innovation at individual sites, and avoid unreasonable demands on site personnel or stakeholders, program and staff offices will coordinate public participation activities through the Office of Public and Consumer Affairs at Headquarters or with its counterpart in the field. This coordination in no way limits or dilutes field managers' authority to implement effective public participation programs or program managers' responsibility to plan, fund, and support appropriate levels of public participation in their programs.

The effectiveness with which each site/program implements the Department's Public Participation Policy will be assessed annually, and these assessments must include the views and recommendations of stakeholders. Stakeholders will also be invited to participate in the processes used to develop criteria and measures for judging effectiveness. The Director of Public and Consumer Affairs will evaluate these annual assessments and recommend changes to improve the effectiveness of the Department's public participation efforts.

While public participation processes must be tailored to meet specific site, program, and stakeholder needs, the following broad guidance provides a framework to assist management in implementing this policy Department-wide. Using the following critical policy elements and implementing actions as a guide, Headquarters and Field Elements should consult with stakeholders to develop appropriate public participation programs and activities.

CRITICAL POLICY ELEMENTS:

- I. The Department recognizes that honesty and forthrightness in dealing with stakeholders, and consistent, credible, quality performance are the bases upon which to build public understanding and trust.

Implementing Actions:

- * Department officials will be open, honest, and accurate in their public statements and accountable for diligent follow-up and timely results from the commitments they make.
- * Department officials will engage in an open and on-going communication process and consistently listen and respond to suggestions made by the public. The Department will incorporate public input into its decisions where appropriate and feasible and will provide feedback to the public on its reasoning.
- * Department officials will recognize and reward leadership and results in the area of public participation.

- II. Departmental program development, planning, and decision-making processes will be clearly defined, with regular, easily identified access points for public input.

Implementing actions:

- * Senior management will ensure that Department personnel, other Federal, State, and local officials, Tribes, and other stakeholders are appropriately integrated into their planning activities and decision-making processes.
- * Stakeholders and field managers will determine and identify pre-decisional access points for public input.

- III. Headquarters, field offices, laboratories, and facilities will operate as an integrated team in planning local and national public participation programs by combining resources, sharing information, and coordinating activities.

Implementing actions:

- * Headquarters Elements will coordinate their planning of public participation activities with the Office of Public and Consumer Affairs and with affected sites, including the site Public Affairs/External Relations director.
- * Field managers, as those closest to affected communities and stakeholders, will facilitate accommodation between local and national interests.

- IV. The Department will establish and support training and education programs to meet evolving public participation needs, both internally and externally.

Implementing actions:

- * Senior management, at Headquarters and in the field, will identify and coordinate communication and public participation training on a priority basis until all appropriate headquarters and site personnel are trained.
- * In consultation with stakeholders, field managers will make recommendations on the timing and content of needed external education/training programs.

- V. The Department will foster candid information exchanges and ongoing two-way communication using a variety of mediums.

Implementing actions:

- * Whether formal or informal, all public participation activities will be conducted in a spirit of openness, respect for different perspectives, and a genuine quest for a diversity of information and ideas.
- * The Department will work to establish, announce, and manage topical data bases of reliable, timely information available to the public through telephone and computer access.

Attachment

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Public participation is open, ongoing, two-way communication, both formal and informal, between the Department of Energy and its stakeholders. This steady, interactive communication enables each party to learn about and better understand the views and positions of the other. The Department recognizes the many benefits to be derived from public participation, for both stakeholders and DOE. Public participation provides a means for the Department to gather the most diverse collection of opinions, perspectives, and values from the broadest spectrum of the public, enabling the Department to make better, more informed decisions. Public participation benefits stakeholders by creating an opportunity to provide input and influence decisions.

POLICY:

Public participation is a fundamental component in program operations, planning activities, and decision-making within the Department. The public is entitled to play a role in Departmental decision-making.

PURPOSE:

This policy is intended to ensure that public participation is an integral and effective part of Departmental activities and that decisions are made with the benefit of important public perspectives. This policy provides a mechanism for bringing a broad range of diverse stakeholder viewpoints and values early into the Department's decision-making processes. This early involvement enables the Department to make more informed decisions, improve quality through collaborative efforts, and build mutual understanding and trust between the Department and the public it serves.

SCOPE:

This policy is designed to function as a general framework within which all Department programs shall operate. While it applies to all levels of DOE, its intent is development and implementation of effective public participation programs at each site. In conjunction with its stakeholders and field manager, each site shall develop and implement a public participation program that promotes openness and two-way communication and is tailored to meet specific program, site, and stakeholder needs. This policy is not intended to affect legal requirements imposed by law, regulation, or contractual agreement; neither does it modify any legal rights available to the public under current law.

DEFINITION:

Under this policy, the Department actively seeks, considers, and incorporates or otherwise responds in a timely manner to the views of its stakeholders, thereby providing them an opportunity to influence decisions. Stakeholders are defined as those individuals and groups in the public and private sectors who are interested in and/or affected by the Department's activities and decisions. Public participation is defined as open, ongoing two-way communication, both formal and informal, within the DOE Complex and between the Department and its stakeholders. This communication will vary widely in nature and scope and may include, but is not limited to, informal conversations, scheduled meetings and workshops, legally required hearings, and Federal-State-local-Tribal agreements.

GOALS:

The goals of the Department's Public Participation Policy are:

- I. The Department actively seeks and considers public input, and incorporates or otherwise responds to the views of its stakeholders in making its decisions.
- II. The public is informed in a timely manner about and empowered to participate in the Department's decision-making processes, which are open, understandable, and consistently followed. Access points for public input are clearly defined from the earliest stages of a decision process and provide adequate time for stakeholders to participate.
- III. Credible, effective public participation processes are consistently incorporated into the Department's program operations, planning activities, and decision-making processes, at headquarters and in the field. Every employee within the DOE Complex shares responsibility to promote, practice, and improve public participation.

CORE VALUES:

Though program-specific public participation activities may vary throughout the DOE Complex, each program will be characterized by the following core values:

- Accessibility: Known avenues to Department leaders who are available, approachable, and open to the public.
- Accountability: Responsibility to the public for its decisions and a willingness to provide explanations for the rationales behind its decisions.
- Accuracy: Commitment to the truth.
- Communication: Open, two-way exchange of information, knowledge, and perspectives between the Department and its stakeholders.

Consistency: Stakeholder interactions marked by regularity and continuity.
Fairness: Objectivity and freedom from favor toward any side.
Honesty: Commitment to fairness, trustworthiness, and straightforwardness.
Innovation: Introduction of new ideas, methods, and approaches.
Openness: Ready accessibility and a willingness to listen to, consider, and respond to stakeholders.
Peer review: Reexamination of key issues and decisions by internal and external peers.
Respect: Consideration and deference in the treatment of stakeholders.
Responsiveness: Timely and empathetic consideration of and response to the needs, wants, and concerns of stakeholders.
Scientific Credibility: Commitment to the pursuit of sound, dependable, leading edge science.
Sincerity: Openness, frankness, and truthfulness in all stakeholder communications.
Time/Timeliness: Adequate amount of time for stakeholders to participate in Department decision-making processes. Timely responses to stakeholder input and requests. Timely Departmental decision-making processes supported but not hindered or delayed by public participation.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Senior departmental, program, and field managers are accountable for assuring that public participation activities meet the goals of this policy and the needs of stakeholders; are fully coordinated; and reflect Departmental principles and values. Managers are responsible for implementing plans that assure that public participation needs for their programs or projects are identified and satisfied in the decision-making process. Public Participation is a performance element for these managers.